

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated November 29, 2005, having a shortened statutory period for response extended one-month set to expire on March 29, 2006. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-3 and 6 remain pending in the application after entry of this response. Claims 1-2 are allowed. Claims 3 and 6 have been cancelled, and claims 7-12 have been added. Please reconsider the pending claims for reasons stated herein.

35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3 and 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Knudson* (US 3,945,444) in view of *Jones, et al.* (US 5,323,858).

Knudson discloses a split bit casing drill having an inner drill bit and a hollow drill bit. *Knudson* makes no mention of cementing the casing in the wellbore. *Jones* discloses cementing a casing in a bore hole without providing a float collar on the casing. *Jones* further discloses a bottom plug having a hollow body that is press-fit into the inner wall of the casing. The casing has inwardly extending lip to engage the bottom plug. However, *Jones* does not disclose forming the hole using drilling with casing. Instead, the casing in *Jones* is run in with "an open end" after the borehole is drilled and the drilling equipment removed. (See col. 2, ln. 67 – col. 3, ln. 7; col. 3, lns. 30-32). Thus, *Jones* is contrary to seating the latching float valve above the drill bit. As a result, there is no motivation or suggestion to combine *Jones* with *Knudson*. Therefore, the references, neither alone nor in combination, teach, show, or suggest pumping the latching float valve from the surface of the earth through the hollow drill string with drilling mud so as to seat the latching float valve above the drill bit, as recited in claim 7. Also, the references, neither alone nor in combination, teach, show, or suggest pumping a latching float valve from the surface of the earth through the drill string with drilling mud so as to seat the latching float valve above the earth removal member, as recited in claim 8. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

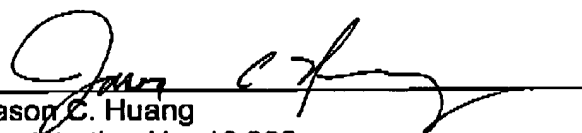
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Conclusion

The references cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination, do not teach, show, or suggest the invention as claimed.

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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